DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 272 278 PS 015 908

AUTHOR Hatch, J. Amos
TITLE Alone in a Crowd: Analysis of Covert Interactions in a Kindergarten.
INSTITUTION Ohio State Univ., Columbus. Coll. of Education.
SPONS AGENCY Spencer Foundation, Chicago, Ill.
PUB DATE Apr 86
NOTE 23p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (67th, San Francisco, CA, April 16-20, 1986).
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Adjustment (to Environment); *Behavior Patterns; Classroom Environment; Classroom Research; *Covert Response; *Interpersonal Relationship; *Kindergarten Children; *Peer Relationship; Primary Education
IDENTIFIERS Context Effect

ABSTRACT

This paper reports findings from a naturalistic study of children's peer interactions in a kindergarten classroom. As the participant observation field-work of the study progressed, it became clear that much of children's interaction in their kindergarten classroom was covert in nature. That is, it took place in classroom contexts defined as situations in which peer conversations were either forbidden or discouraged. The focus of the study was then directed toward the character of such situations and children's covert interactions within them. The findings describe contexts in which children's talking was officially limited and identify patterns of interaction children used in reaction to classroom limitations. Students' response patterns were classified into three domains: (1) forgetting expectations, (2) secret communications, and (3) exploring the limits. Each category of response is discussed as an example of children making secondary adjustments to institutional role expectations of the school. (RH)

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Alone in a Crowd:

Analysis of Covert Interactions

in a Kindergarten

J. Amos Hatch

The Ohio State University

Marion Campus

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PS 015908

Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Francisco, April 1986.

This research was supported in part by a grant from the Spencer Foundation which was administered through The Ohio State University, College of Education Awards to Young Scholars.

Alone in a Crowd:
Analysis of Covert Interactions
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In Life in Classrooms, Jackson (1968) revealed for inspection the taken-for-granted crowdedness which defines everyday experience for children in school. Jackson pointed out that, even though classrooms are social situations wherein individuals are required to work in close proximity with others for long periods of time, these individuals are in many cases expected to act as if they were alone. Jackson's description is powerful.

> In a sense, then, students must try to behave as if they were in solitude, when in point of fact they are not. They must keep their eyes on their paper when human faces beckon. Indeed, in the early grades it is not uncommon to find students facing each other around a table while at the same time being required not to communicate with each other. These young people, if they are to become successful students, must learn how to be alone in a crowd (1968, p. 16).

This paper reports findings from a naturalistic study of children's peer interactions in a kindergarten classroom. As the participant observation field-work of the study progressed, the researcher's analyses revealed that much of children's interaction in their kindergarten classroom was covert in nature. That is, it took place in classroom contexts defined as situations in which peer conversations were either forbidden or discouraged. The researcher then focused future observations so that the character of these situations and children's covert interactions within them could be more closely examined. The findings of this study are a description of contexts in which children's talking was officially limited and patterns of interaction children used in reaction to these limitations. Classroom covert interactions are discussed as an example of children's personal adjustments to the institutional demands of schooling.

Perspectives, Methods, and Data Source

This study approaches the investigation of children's social behavior from an interactionist theoretical perspective and applies methodological principles, data gathering practices, and analytical techniques from the naturalistic research paradigm (Blumer, 1969; Denzin, 1978; Lincoln & Guba, 1984). Interactionists take the view that participants in particular contexts construct social reality among themselves through the give and take processes of face-to-face interaction. Naturalistic research undertakes the reconstruction of that reality from the perspectives of the social actors involved. Participant observation, interviewing, and the collection of unobstrusive data are the primary tools for gathering data which reflect naturally occuring social events. Analysis of these data is an inductive, systematic examination to determine the components of the social phenomena under investigation, the relationships among components, and their relationship to the wider contexts involved (Schwartz & Jacobs, 1979; Spradley, 1980).

In this study, the researcher conducted participant observation field work in a kindergarten classroom. During the period from January through May of 1985, thirty-five observational visits were made and one hundred twelve hours of child-to-child social behavior were recorded. The researcher informally interviewed the classroom teacher throughout the participant observation cycle and conducted taped, "ethnographic" interviews (Spradley, 1979) twice with the teacher (midway and at the conclusion of observations) and once with each child (following the observation phase). Unobtrusive measures, as described by Denzin (1978), were utilized throughout the study. Examples of unobtrusive data include: school and district reports, official documents, student cumulative records, and student and teacher produced

artifacts. During the observation phase, the researcher took a passive role (Spradley, 1980) in the classroom, making every effort to avoid interaction with children and to blend into the fabric of the classroom. Data analysis and collection were guided by the "Developmental Research Sequence" designed by Spradley (1980). Analytical generalizations were carefully grounded in the data using principles of "analytic induction" described by Denzin (1978).

Findings

The study was conducted in a morning kindergarten program in a K-5 elementary school located in a middle-class neighborhood in a small mid-western city. Kindergarten attendance is not required by the state in which the study was conducted.

At the beginning of the study, the class enrollment was twenty-six. One child moved and two joined the class during the research. The original group consisted of fourteen girls and twelve boys. Two girls in the original group were black, one girl was oriental, and the others were white. Eleven of the twelve original boys were white, and one was oriental. One white male left the group, and one white and one black male joined the class during the study.

As observations began in January of 1985, the ages of the children in the study ranged from 5 years 3 months to 6 years 4 months. The average age of the group was 5 years 7 months. The oldest child in the class was one of two boys repeating kindergarten. Of the twenty-six children for whom family data were available, sixteen (61.5%) were living with both parents, seven (26.9%) were with mothers only, two (7.7%) were with mothers and step-fathers, and one (3.8%) was living with his father only. The average number of siblings of children in the study was 1.2; five were only children and two children had three siblings (the most in the class).

The teacher in the study was a white female with sixteen years experience in kindergarten. She was identified by school district administrators as an excellent kindergarten teacher. The researcher observed that this teacher devoted large amounts of extra time to her work. She often spent whole Saturdays working at the school during the study.

The kindergarten program in the school district featured a "whole-language" approach to reading instruction. Experience stories and "Big Book" activites were part of daily routines in the studied classroom. The teacher avoided using workbooks and other paper and pencil activities as a matter of policy. Her classroom behavior reflected the philosophical orientation expressed in her response to the interview question: "Is there a difference in teaching kindergarten and first or second grade?"

> Yes. You're just forming the foundation for everything else they are going to learn. They need to learn problem solving techniques and they need to learn decision making and they need to learn appropriate reaction to criticism when it is necessary and it's just more important to me than the academic end of learning. I still feel we should just not worry about the academic that much. We need to put the emphasis on learning how to get along in the world and how to function in an acceptable manner and if you get the social-emotional adjustment under control then everything else is going to fall in to place for most kids.

The routine for beginning the day in the studied kindergarten fits the following general pattern. Children entered the room from 8:30 a.m. to 8:45. They took off their winter gear and selected activites from throughout the room until the class members were called to their seats at around 8:50. Teacher asked a "question of the day" as a device for checking attendance (for example, on the first observation day, the question was: "How many people in your family wear glasses?") Next, milk count was taken. The child assigned the "milk helper" role counted children who stood for white or chocolate milk. The flag

was saluted with the Pledge of Allegiance or a patriotic song. Next, children were called to the rug for a calender activity. At 9:00 school announcements were broadcast over the P.A. system. Still on the rug, a weather activity and "sharing time" were conducted.

The usual pattern was to divide the time between about 9:05 and snack time (about 10:00) into "work period;" large group music, social studies, or language development activities conducted on the rug; and large group activities (e.g. art production, writing in personal journals, and cut and paste activities) conducted with children in their seats. During work periods, children selected from activities available throughout the room. Some activities included the computer, blocks and toys, puzzles, an art center, a playhouse and dress-up area, and writing and math centers. Often the teacher would pull small groups of children during work period and give them special instructions and assign special activities.

Snack was provided daily. Children drank milk in their seats and ate crackers, fruit, or cookies provided by parents. The time after the completion of snack time (about 10:20) was typically used for large group music activities on the rug; story reading, language experience, and Big Book activities on the rug; large group art production, personal journals, and cut and paste activities in their seats; and large group science, social studies, science, health, or language development activities on the rug.

At about 11:00 children were asked to clean up and called to the rug. Teacher used this final rug time to summarize the day; to do chart stories; to do music activities and finger plays; and to reinforce lessons covered that morning. Children put on their winter gear, lined up and were dismissed at 11:30.

Flexibility was an understood part of classroom routine. Scheduled

weekly experience with Art, P.E., and Music resource teachers and library time were accomodated into morning activities. The teacher managed many classroom transitions by turning off the lights, signalling children to "freeze" and listen.

The descriptions above are offered in an attempt to give the reader a sense of the contextual structure of the kindergarten under investigation and to provide a framework for talking about children's adaptions to the expectations of limited peer interaction in their classroom. In many of the activity contexts mentioned above, children were encouraged to interact freely with their peers. The only restrictions for work period interactions were that children use their "indoor" voices and not behave in ways that might hurt others or themselves. During snack time children were encouraged to talk quietly and remain in their seats. Only on rare occasions were children expected to work silently when completing large group activities in their seats.

The contexts of interest in this investigation were those which were defined as times when child-to-child interactions were either forbidden or discouraged. Talking was officially forbidden when the lights were flashed off, when a child was speaking before the group during sharing time, when children were moving through school hallways, and when the teacher was giving direct instruction to the class. "Officially forbidden" means that a classroom rule had been established and was referred to when children were corrected for talking (e.g., Teacher: "Who can remind Debby of what we do when the lights are off?")

Child-to-child talk was discouraged in a number of classroom settings even though official rules against such talk were not evident. Talking was discouraged during group activities in which all students were expected to be involved. Most large group activities conducted

on the rug were contexts in which child-to-child talk was discouraged. Music, social studies, science, language, and Big Book activities done on the rug involved children as spontaneous participants and the teacher allowed varying amounts of "non-task" talk among children during these times.

Other whole group activities conducted while the students were at their seats, in particular opening excercises (question of the day, milk count, flag salute, school p.a. announcements, calender, and weather activities), were also contexts in which talking was discouraged, though not officially "ruled" out. Waiting in line was another context in which peer interaction was discouraged. Lines were formed for moving through hallways (to resource classrooms or school assemblies) and for dismissal each day.

The teacher used a variety of techniques for prompting children who's interaction with peers exceeded expectations. Strategies which went beyond referring to rules included pointing out that others were being disturbed, separating children, moving closer to students, directing students to stop talking, starting a song or finger-play, pointing out the exemplary behavior of a quiet child, and several non-verbal signals such as clapping hands, snapping fingers, flashing the lights, and using facial gestures and/or body language which communicated disappointment or anger.

This report takes the perspective that participants in social situations work together to establish how particular contexts are defined. From this perspective the students were actively involved, along with the teacher, in constructing or constituting classroom contexts (see Erickson and Shultz, 1981; Mehan, 1979; Wallet and Green, 1979). What are described below are analytic domains which organize student response patterns in situations in which child-to-child talk

was forbidden or discouraged. Three response domains were identified: Forgetting Expectations, Secret Communications, and Exploring the Limits. These domains will be described separately using excerpts from field-note data. It should be pointed out that although separating the domains is a necessary conceptual tool, in the give and take of classroom interaction, the responses described would be evident in complex combination.

Forgetting Expectations

Children in the study frequently became so involved in activities or those around them that they simply forgot that there were either official or "understood" classroom sanctions against interacting verbally with peers. "Forgetting" here means that children's awareness of expectations is over-ridden by the stimulation of their immediate surroundings. Intentionality was not involved; that is, they did not decide to forget. The events and/or the children around them drew them into spontaneous interactions and expectations were forgotten.

Forgetting expectations occurred in contexts in which child-to-child talk was forbidden and discouraged. In both kinds of contexts, two patterns typified interactions in which children forgot what was expected. In the first pattern, children responded to some sort of outside stimulus by sharing their reaction with peers. The following field note excerpts are examples of this pattern in contexts where talk was forbidden. As is demonstrated in the examples, the source of stimulation could be the activity prepared by the teacher or spontaneous events unrelated to the lesson.

> As Kip shares a seashell she got in Florida, she mentions eating red snapper. On the rug, Sam turns to Les: "I had a boa." Joni joins in: "I had fish sticks." Frank turns his back to the teacher and Kip, faces Sam: "I had a boa constrictor." Teacher: "Frank, Kip has not finished." The children return their attention to Kip.

As teacher is giving directions for a cut and paste classification activity, Collette gets up from her seat and gets a sweater vest from her cubby-hole. Connie to Collette: "Are you going to share that?" Collette: "No, I'm gonna put it on 'cause I'm cold." Collette rolls the sweater into a ball, sets it on the table in front of her, and pets and strokes it. Connie: "Is that your pet?" Both girls laugh. Connie repeats: "Is that your pet? Do you love it? Is that your pet?" The girls laugh together.

In contexts in which talking was discouraged, the pattern of responding to outside stimulation was also evident. In the same ways as are demonstrated above, stimuli came from lessons and spontaneous events.

The second pattern of forgetting expectations differed from the first in that no immediately observable outside stimulus was evident. Children made contact and created interactions without reference to conditions other than the immediate proximity of peers. Examples of such interactions in contexts where talking was discouraged are presented below. Behaviors in "forbidden" contexts were parallel in form.

During the question of the day activity at their seats, Lester reaches across his desk and interlocks his fingers with Henry's. The boys exchange eye contact and twist each other's fingers together. Lester makes "wee wee wee" sounds and forces Henry's hands toward Henry's face on each "wee." Henry dodges, smiles, and says: "Hold it. Hold it." Teacher calls Lester's name. The boys stop.

As Frank joins John and Tom at the back of the library line, he extends his arms from his shoulders, spins around, and says: "I'ma helicopter." All three boys begin spinning with their arms out. All say: "We're helicoptors." They begin bumping into each other and others in line. As John is bumped he crashes to the floor and all laugh.

Secret Communications

Secret communications were children's interactions that took place with the intention of subverting expectations that they would not talk. These interactions can be characterized as situations in which children recognized that they should not be talking yet undertook their inter-

actions in secret as a way around the expectations.

That children were aware they were violating expectations in these situations is apparent in the data. In the following excerpts, children used "watch and whisper" patterns of interaction; that is, as they talked, they watched the teacher to see if they were being observed. Children turned their interaction on and off and the volume of their talk up and down based on the focus of attention and location of the teacher.

> Kathy is under the table as sharing begins. She touches Collette on the leg and beckons in a whisper: "Come on." Collette looks for teacher, sees teacher is not looking, and joins Kathy under the table. They spend three or four minutes under the table whispering and giggling together. Collette looks out for teacher, sees teacher seeing her and jumps up into her seat. As teacher's attention turns away, Collette slides back under the table.

> As teacher describes what the class will be doing for the rest of the week, Sam leans over the back of his chair to the next table and touches Megan on the shoulder. Megan moves away playfully and they exchange smiles. Sam glances at teacher and seeing she's occupied, leans forward, cups his mouth with his hand and whispers: "Marie didn't come to soccer. She didn't even come to the game." Megan looks for teacher, leans forward, cups her mouth and says: "Huh?" Sam checks to see if teacher is aware of their interaction and repeats his statements in a slightly louder whisper.

Exploring the Limits

Children's secret communications acknowledged the expectations enforced by the teacher yet found ways around those expectations. Children's watch and whisper strategies were designed to avoid censure by avoiding detection. Other child-to-child interactions observed in the study were undertaken by children with the awareness that their talk was inappropriate or forbidden, but without an observable effort to avoid detection by the teacher. These kinds of interactions fit within the category of interactions identified as exploring the limits.

Exploring the limits interactions were those in which children took the posture that they were going to interact and accept possible sanctions as "no big deal" or that they were going to interact in defiance of expectations. This domain does not include situations in which individual children challenged the teacher or directly refused to obey her. The behaviors of interest took place in interaction contexts in which pairs or small groups of children decided at some level to not do what they knew they were supposed to do. No interactions which could qualify as overt group defiance were observed. Children tested the teacher and conspired together to see how far they could go without forcing a direct confrontation with the teacher.

Almost all examples of exploring the limits interaction occurred in situations defined above as contexts in which child-to-child talk was discouraged. When the limits were clear (i.e., talk was forbidden by rule), exploring the limits was rarely observed. The few exceptions observed occurred during "lights out" periods when the lights out signal was being used to reduce the class noise level during especially loud activities.

Three examples of exploring the limits interaction are presented below. The examples were selected and ordered to represent a range of "exploring" from playful interactions to situations approaching group defiance of teacher authority.

> As the principal's announcements are broadcast over the p.a. system, Suzy and Stephanie are playing a game. Suzy hides a small object in one of her fists then presents both to Stephanie who is told to: "Guess which one." Stephanie touches one hand and the girls smile, exchange eye contact, laugh, and talk quietly as they play. Teacher looks sternly at Suzy who quickly looks away from teacher's stare and continues the game. Teacher moves closer to the girls as the announcements continue. Suzy stops the game when teacher comes close. However, when teacher stays, Suzy goes back to the game [Suzy knows teacher is watching and disapproves, yet she continues.]

As teacher releases them from the rug to line up for P.E., Joni, Tomeka, and Linda join hands in a circle and jump up and down saying "hot, hot, hot." Teacher turns to them, puts her finger to her lips and says: "Shsh." Linda turns to the others and says: "Did she say yell?" They look at each other, giggle together, and resume jumping and saying "hot."

As teacher and children are at the rug writing an experience story on a chart, Stephanie climbs onto a table at the back of the group and lounges on her back with her legs crossed. Debby sees her and joins her on the table. Tomeka joins the other girls and now three girls are lounging on the table. Teacher notices the three and says: "Please sit with us on the rug so we can finish our story." Tomeka asks: Why can't we stay like this?" Teacher starts to explain: "Because it wouldn't be fair to the others," then stops and says: "I'm not going to take any more time. I said sit, so sit." The girls look at each other and slowly, one by one they move toward the rug. Debby is last and when she moves too slowly, teacher says: "OK Debby, you may go to your seat." As Debby takes her seat, Tomeka stands, takes a seat next to Debby, folds her arms, and waits to see what teacher will do. Teacher stops, puts her hands in her lap, stares at Tomeka, and waits. Without speaking, Tomeka slides back to the rug.

In summary, the findings of this study describe patterns of response children used in classroom contexts in which child-to-child talk was forbidden or discouraged. Their response patterns were classified into three domains: Forgetting Expectations, Secret Communications, and Exploring the Limits. Forgetting expectations occurred when children responded to events in the classroom or the proximity of others by forgetting classroom sanctions against interacting with peers. Secret communications were produced by children as an intentional means of interacting with peers when such interactions were forbidden or discouraged by avoiding detection by the teacher. Exploring the limits were intentional responses in which children remembered expectations and chose to interact without masking their behaviors with secrecy.

Discussion and Implications

Sociologists who have studied schools as institutions and schooling processes as socialization into institutional life (e.g., Henry, 1963; Parsons, 1959) believe that the ways classrooms are structured, the ways activities for children are presented and evaluated, and the ways children are expected to behave in school teach powerful lessons which go beyond the overt, "written down" curriculum. The findings of this study will be discussed within this "sociological" perspective. Children's responses to the expectation that they will behave as if they are alone while they are surrounded by others are discussed as beginning forms of "secondary adjustments" (Goffman, 1961) which children make to institutional expectations; adjustments they will develop and use throughout their school experience.

From the perspective taken here, schools functions as a primary socializing agency responsible for transmitting cultural values, norms, and expectations from generation to generation. Parsons (1959, p. 298) describes the goals of such socialization as "the development in individuals of the commitments and capacities which are essential prerequesites of their future role performance" and sees early experiences in schools as settings in which the foundations for such commitments and capacities are established. Henry (1963) agrees that early school experiences are designed to do much more than teach academic rudiments. Henry argues that the most important function of elementary school experiences is to teach institutional definitions and social meanings. In his words, "The elementary school classrom in our culture is one of the most powerful instruments in this socialization effort, for it does not merely sustain attitudes, that have been created in the home, but reinforces some, deemphasizes others, and makes its own contribution" (Henry, 1963, p. 192). From this perspective, then, schools are special institutions

designed, in part, to prepare children to function in the other institutions of our culture.

A central feature of socialization in school institutions is the subordination of personal desires to the demands of those in authority (Jackson, 1968; Webb, 1981). That this is a prominent and pervasive social lesson in early childhood classrooms was evident in an analysis of kindergarten report cards completed by the author and a colleague (Hatch and Freeman, 1986). Among report cards examined, 62.3% included "Follows Rules," 50.8% included "Demonstrates Self Control," 29.5% included "Respects Authority," and 27.9% included "Accepts Responsibility for Actions" as measures of Social/Personal Development. Each indicater expresses the norm that successful kindergarteners have learned to subordinate personal desires to expectations established by the institution and interpreted by the teacher.

In every institution, there are official role expectations defining how individuals are supposed to act (Webb, 1981). Goffman (1961) describes primary and secondary adjustments which individuals make to the role expectations of institutions. Primary adjustments occur when individuals conform to institutional expectations. Secondary adjustments, however, are quite different. Goffman points out that within institutions there are individuals who "decline in some way to accept the official view of what they should be putting into and getting out of the organization" (1961, p. 302). These individuals are making secondary adjustments to role expectations in institutions.

Webb (1981) applies the notion of secondary adjustments to the analysis of student behavior in relationship to school expectations. He describes student secondary adjustments as ways of "making do" in school institutions without "fully joining or fully rejecting the system" (Webb, 1981, p. 231). Webb describes sophisticated second-

ary adjustments such as using institutional facilities for illicit purposes (e.g., smoking in the boys room), currying favor (apple-polishing), and tempering vulnerability (devaluing teachers as people by giving them depersonalizing nicknames). He points out that although "it takes time to perfect secondary adjustments . . ., a careful look will reveal an active underlife even in first-grade classrooms (Webb, 1981, p. 231). This discussion goes further. Children's response patterns to institutional expectations will be discussed as evidence of an active, if rudimentary, underlife in a kindergarten classroom.

Making Do in Kindergarten

The personal desire to be subordinated by the kindergarteners in this study was the desire to be positively affiliated with peers. Research by the author and others suggests that being thought a worthy affiliate by peers is an important social-psychological objective for young children (Hatch, 1984; in press; Schmuck, 1978). Making contact with peers and having satifying child-to-child interactions were highly valued in the peer culture of the studied classroom. Their everyday experience in school included adjusting to the conflict between personal desires to interact and institutional expectations that in many contexts they would supress those desires. For most children most of the time, primary adjustments were made; that is, they conformed to teacher expectations. Some of the time, however, all of the children perticipated in constructing secondary adjustments to "make do" in response to the institutional sanctions against interacting.

The three domains which organized the findings above were Forgetting Expectations, Secret Communications, and Exploring the Limits. Each will be discussed in relation to the secondary adjustment construct.

Forgetting expectations does not qualify as an "adjustment" in the

sense that children selected it as an intentional strategy for dealing with conflicting desires and expectations. Still, looking into the dynamics of forgetting offers evidence for the thesis of this discussion. Young children enter the institutional world of schooling with needs and desires, among them to be in positive contact with peers, and to some degree these needs and desires must be sublimated to the expectations of school life. Among the tasks of teachers of young children are first to make children aware that personal desires sometimes conflict with institutional expectations; and second to teach children to conform to the expectations. Forgetting expectations signals the teacher that the first task is not completed while providing children with a built-in buffer against expectations which they developmentally may not be prepared to meet.

Secret Communications are among the first 'true' secondary adjustments to school life. Webb (1981) includes secret communications in his description of secondary adjustments in school. For advanced practitioners, secret communication involves note writing, secret codes, sign-language, and pantomine behind the teacher's back. Children's secret communications described in this study served similar functions in response to similar constraints. A pervasive characteristic of schooling in our culture is that legitimate communication between students is severely limited (Jackson, 1968; Webb, 1981). The watch and whisper behaviors of children in this study were their rudimentary way of adjusting. They neither fully conformed nor openly rebelled. They satisfied their desire to interact without incurring the sanctions of the system by avoiding detection.

Exploring the limits represents a kind of negotiation between teacher and students concerning what classroom expectations exactly are. Getting teachers to loosen up expectations and apply rules

differently in individual cases is a secondary adjustment pattern observed in studies of pupil cultures conducted in classrooms for older children (see, e.g., Hammersley & Woods, 1984). Such studies document the give and take relationship between teachers and students around how universally school rules are applied in particular circumstances and the teachers' perceived fairness in interpreting school policy.

The children in this study understood that different expectations applied under different circumstances. For example, while talking was forbidden in hallway lines and when the lights were out in the classroom, children knew they could go much further without getting into trouble in the room with the lights off than in the hallway. These young children were able to adjust their behavior to the tone of voice and apparent mood of the teacher and to the changing "tone" of classroom activities. When activities were loud and teacher tried to bring the noise level down, children understood that they could go further in their explorations of the limits than when activities were quiet and teacher was clearly in charge.

Exploring the limits were initial expressions of a peer culture which defined itself as having values and norms that in some ways opposed the official values and norms of the classroom. The development of such a peer culture is a fact of life in schools across western society. It ought not to be surprising that they begin developing in kindergarten, especially since kindergartens are faced with institutional expectations that look very much like first and second grade expectations of a few years ago.

In his landmark book Life in Classrooms, Jackson (1968) introduced the term "hidden curriculum" to describe the powerful tacit social lessons that students learn through participation in the schooling experience. Social researchers interested in the study of schools

use analyses such as those presented here as ways to understand the structure and function of schools as social institutions. This report contributes to the growing literature describing the tacit "underlife" of schoolrooms, the hidden curriculum. In particular, the development of response patterns in children's peer groups are described. These descriptions may be useful to other researchers interested in the emergence of pupil culture and socialization processes in schools.

In response to the research on the tacit lessons of schooling, Martin (1976) asks: 'What should we do with a hidden curriculum when we find one?" This is an important question for teachers and other educators responsible for designing and implementing activities for children in school.

As has been argued elsewhere by the author (Hatch, 1985), sound educational decision making at any level ought to be guided by the most complete information available. Knowledge of the "hidden curriculum" associated with particular expectations and practices may not warrant the elimination or even alteration of these practices. Still, being aware of the social dimensions of schooling and the powerful impact of the taken-for-granted in school life can bring an added dimension to information used in educational decision making. Katz (1979) has argued that schooling is different from other socializing institutions because its activities are intentional and deliberate. She asserts that information from "supply" disciplines (psychology, sociology, anthropology) ought to be used to "rationalize" what is done in educational settings (Katz, 1979, p. 102). Rational decision making is needed at the classroom level and beyond. Understanding the "hidden" dimension of schooling can improve the quality and scope of decisions.

Studies such as the one presented here may assist educators of young children in understanding some of the dynamics of peer interaction

in classroom settings. By focusing on secondary adjustment patterns in one setting, educators are provided with a framework for examining such patterns in their own settings. In addition, knowledge of the give and take nature of how contexts are constituted in classrooms may improve teachers awareness of the importance of teacher-student interactions. Finally, by examining expectations in one classroom and how one group of young children responded, educators can better evaluate the processes of establishing and communicating appropriate expectations in their own classrooms.

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